CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Statement of President Lyndon B. Johnson dated 24 August 1967

"Today at Geneva the United States and the Soviet Union as Co-Chairmen of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee are submitting to the Committee a draft treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

"For more than twenty years, the world has watched with growing fear as nuclear weapons have spread.

"Since 1945, five nations have come into possession of these dreadful weapons. We believe now - as we did then - that even one such nation is too many. But the issue now is not whether some have nuclear weapons while others do not. The issue is whether the nations will agree to prevent a bad situation from becoming worse.

"Today, for the first time, we have within our reach an instrument which permits us to make a choice.

"The submission of a draft treaty brings us to the final and most critical stage of this effort. The draft will be available for consideration by all governments, and for negotiation by the Conference.

"The treaty must reconcile the interests of nations with our interest as a community of human beings on a small planet. The treaty must be responsive to the needs and problems of all the nations of the world - great and small, aligned and non-aligned, nuclear and non-nuclear.

"It must add to the security of all.

"It must encourage the development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

"It must provide adequate protection against the corruption of the peaceful atom to its use for weapons of war.

"I am convinced that we are today offering an instrument that will meet these requirements.

"If we now go forward to completion of a worldwide agreement, we will pass on a great gift to those who follow us.

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"We shall demonstrate that - despite all his problems, quarrels, and distractions - man still retains a capacity to design his fate, rather than be engulfed by it.

"Failure to complete our work will be interpreted by our children and grandchildren as a betrayal of conscience, in a world that needs all of its resources and talents to serve life, not death.

"I have given instructions to the United States representative, William C. Foster, which reflect our determination to ensure that a fair and effective treaty is concluded.

"The Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament now has before it the opportunity to make a cardinal contribution to man's safety and peace."